

springing curvature as contrasted with dead, inert wriggle, you have only to look at your boughs and do your best to give their true lines, and having completed the main branches go on, as time serves, and patience, to the more obviously and gracefully curved twigs, putting in as many as you can with care, and not resting satisfied with mere scrabble and fuzziness. This you can do with any leafless tree in wood, park, or garden. It need not be a particularly noble or finely grown specimen; it had better not be some rarity which you fancy because of its strangeness, but such a tree as you are sure to find not far away, standing well against the sky or plain background of wall. Keep these points or stages in mind, and try for one at a time—(1) Outline of whole tree, (2) placing and direction of main boughs, (3) their thickness and tapering, (4) their radiation, (5) their curvature, and (6) the smaller twigs.

Then to paint what you have pencilled, for by now it is likely that your drawing will be rather messy, and you will be glad of the opportunity of fixing the true lines in colour and cleaning away all the mistakes with indiarubber or bread. Take a small brush (a sixpenny sable in tin) and paint your tree, the finer boughs with the point, the broader with the edge. If you are a town-dweller perhaps lampblack will be colour enough; but if you live in the country, and especially if you work on a sunny day, you will find many pretty warm colours in the stem and greater branches, and purply greys in the shadows and across them. It would be wiser not to attempt a background; the tree is troublesome enough in itself; but I leave that to your feeling and discretion. The drawings must be sent me at Gillhead, Windermere, by April 25. They will not, perhaps, be very beautiful pictures; the value of them will be in what you learn rather than in what you produce. It is to give you power, to put a weapon in your hands, that I ask you to take all this trouble. Do you remember how the story of the Branstock ended?—how one evening an old man, one-eyed, whom they knew for Father Odin, came and smote his sword to the hilt into the trunk of the tree that stood in the midst of King Volsung's hall and overshadowed his roof. And Odin said, "Whoso draweth this sword from this stock shall have the same as a gift from me, and shall find in good sooth that never bare he better sword in hand than this is."*

* See note on page 124.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

A SEQUEL TO "HOME EDUCATION."

BY THE EDITOR.

IV.—PARENTS AS INSPIRERS. *THIRD PART.*

It is probable that parents as a class feel more than ever before the responsibility of their prophetic office. It is as revealers of God to their children that parents touch their highest limitations; perhaps it is only as they succeed in this part of their work that they fulfil the divine intention in giving them children to bring up—in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

How to fortify the children against the doubts of which the air is full, is an anxious question. Three courses are open—to teach as we of an older generation have been taught, and to let them bide their time and their chance; to attempt to deal with the doubts and difficulties which have turned up, or are likely to turn up; or to give children such hold upon vital truth, and, at the same time, such an outlook upon current thought, that they shall be landed on the safe side of the controversies of their day, open to truth, in however new a light presented, and safeguarded against mortal error.

The first course is unfair upon the young: when the attack comes they find themselves at a disadvantage; they have nothing to reply; their pride is in arms; they jump to the conclusion that there is no defence possible of that which they have received as truth; had there been would they not have been instructed to make it? They resent being made out in the wrong, being on the weaker side—so it seems to them, being behind their times; and they go over without a struggle to the side of the most aggressive thinkers of their day.

Let us suppose that, on the other hand, they have been fortified with "Christian Evidences," defended by bulwarks of sound dogmatic teaching. Religion without definite dogmatic teaching degenerates into sentiment, but dogma, as dogma, offers no defence against the assaults of unbelief. As for "evidences," the rôle of the Christian apologist is open to the imputation conveyed

in the keen proverb, *qui s'excuse, s'accuse*; the truth by which we live must needs be self-evidenced, admitting of neither proof nor disproof. Children should be taught Bible history with every elucidation which modern research makes possible. But they should not be taught to think of the inscriptions on the Assyrian monuments, for example, as *proofs* of the truth of the Bible records.

Let us look at the third course, and first, as regards the outlook upon current thought. Cotemporary opinion is the fetish of the young mind. Young people are eager to know what to think on all the serious questions of religion and life. They ask, what is the opinion of this and that leading thinker of their day. They by no means confine themselves to such leaders of thought as their parents have elected to follow; on the contrary, the "other side" of every question is the attractive side for them, and they do not choose to be behind the foremost in the race of thought.

Now, that their young people should thus take to the water need not come upon parents as a surprise. The whole training from babyhood upward should be in view of this plunge. When the time comes there is nothing to be done; openly, it may be, secretly, if the home rule is rigid, the young folk think their own thoughts; that is, they follow the leader they have elected; for they are truly modest and humble at heart, and do not yet venture to think for themselves; only they have transferred their allegiance. Nor is this transfer of allegiance to be resented by parents; we all claim this kind of "suffrage" in our turns when we feel ourselves included in larger interests than those of the family.

But there is much to be done beforehand, though nothing when the time comes. The notion that any cotemporary authority is infallible may be steadily undermined from infancy onwards, though at some sacrifice of ease and glory to the parents. "I don't know" must take the place of the vague wise-sounding answer, the random shot which children's pertinacious questionings too often provokes. And "I don't know" should be followed by the effort to know, the research necessary to find out. Even then, the possibility of error in a "print-book" must occasionally be faced. The results of this kind of training in the way of mental balance and repose are invaluable.

Another safeguard is in the attitude of reservation, shall we

say, which it may be well to preserve towards "Science." It is well that the enthusiasm of children should be kindled, that they should see how glorious it is to devote a lifetime to patient research, how great to find out a single secret of nature, a key to many riddles. The heroes of science should be their heroes; the great names, especially of those who are amongst us, should be household words. But here, again, nice discrimination should be exercised; two points should be kept well to the front—the absolute silence of the oracle on all ultimate questions of origin and life, and the fact that, all along the line, scientific truth comes in like the tide, with steady advance, but with flow and ebb of every wavelet of truth; so much so, that, at the present moment, the teaching of the last twenty years is discredited in, at least, half a dozen departments of science. Indeed, it would seem to be the part of wisdom to wait half a century before fitting the discovery of to-day into the general scheme of things. And this, not because the latest discovery is not absolutely true, but because we are not yet able so to adjust it—according to the "science of the proportion of things"—that it shall be relatively true.

But all this is surely beyond children? By no means; every walk should quicken their enthusiasm for the things of nature, and their reverence for the priests of the temple; but occasion should be taken to mark the progressive advances of science, and the fact that the teaching of to-day may be the error of to-morrow, because new light may lead to new conclusions even from the facts already known. "Until quite lately geologists thought * * *, they now think * * *, but they may find reason to think otherwise in the future." To perceive that knowledge is *progressive*, and that the next "find" may always alter the bearings of what went before; that we are waiting, and may have very long to wait, for the last word; that science also is "revelation," though we are not yet able fully to interpret what we know; and that "science" herself contains the promise of great impetus to the spiritual life—to perceive these things is to be able to rejoice in all truth and to wait for final certainty.

In another way we may endeavour to secure for the children that stability of mind which comes of self-knowledge. It is well that they should know, so early that they will seem to themselves always to have known, some of the laws of thought which govern their own minds. Let them know that, once an

idea takes possession of them, it will pursue, so to speak, its own course, will establish its own place in the very substance of the brain, will draw its own train of ideas after it. One of the most fertile sources of youthful infidelity is the fact that thoughtful boys and girls are infinitely surprised when they come to notice the course of their own thoughts. They read a book or listen to talk with a tendency to, what is to them, "free-thought." And then, the "fearful joy" of finding that their own thoughts begin with the thought they have heard, and go on and on to new and startling conclusions on the same lines! The mental stir of all this gives a delightful sense of power; and a sense of inevitableness and certainty too, for they do not intend or try to think this or that. It comes of itself; their reason, they believe, is acting independently of them, and how can they help assuming that what comes to them of itself, with an air of absolute certainty, must of necessity be right?

But what if from childhood they had been warned, "Take care of your thoughts, and the rest will take care of itself; let a thought in, and it will stay; will come again to-morrow and the next day, will make a place for itself in your brain, and will bring many other thoughts like itself. Your business is to look at the thoughts as they come, to keep out the wrong thoughts, and let in the right. See that ye *enter not* into temptation." This sort of teaching is not so hard to understand as the rules for the English nominative, and is of infinitely more profit in the conduct of life. It is a great safeguard to know that your "reason" is capable of proving any theory you allow yourself to entertain.

We have touched here only on the negative side of the parent's work as prophet, inspirer. There are perhaps few parents to whom the innocence of the babe in its mother's arms does not appeal with pathetic force. "Open me the gates of righteousness, that I may go in unto them," is the voice of the little unworldly child; and a wish, anyway, that he may be kept unspotted from the world is breathed in every kiss of his mother, in the light of his father's eyes. But how ready we are to conclude that children cannot be expected to understand spiritual things. Our own grasp of the things of the Spirit is all too lax, and how can we expect that the child's feeble intelligence can apprehend the highest mysteries of our being? But here we are altogether wrong. It is with the advance of years

that a materialistic temper settles upon us. But the children live in the light of the morning-land. The spirit-world has no mysteries for them; that parable and travesty of the spirit-world, the fairy-world, where all things are possible, is it not their favourite dwelling-place? And fairy tales are so dear to children because their spirits fret against the hard and narrow limitations of time and place and substance; they cannot breathe freely in a material world. Think what the vision of God should be to the little child, already peering wistfully through the bars of his prison-house. Not a far-off God, a cold abstraction, but a warm, breathing, spiritual Presence about his path and about his bed—a Presence in which he recognises protection and tenderness in darkness and danger, towards which he rushes as the timid child to hide his face in his mother's skirts.

A friend tells me the following story of her girlhood. It so happened that extra lessons detained her at school until dark every day during the winter. She was extremely timid, but with the unconscious reserve of youth never thought of mentioning her fear of "something." Her way home lay by a river-side, a solitary path under trees—big trees, with masses of shadow. The black shadows, in which "something" might lie hid—the *swish-sh*, *swish-sh* of the river, which might be whisperings or the rustle of garments—filled her night by night with unabated terror. She fled along that riverside path with beating heart; but, quick as flying steps and beating heart, these words beat in her brain, over, and over, and over, the whole length of the way, evening by evening, winter after winter: "Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." Years after, when the woman might be supposed to have outgrown girlish terrors, she found herself again walking alone in the early darkness of a winter's evening, under trees, by the *swish-sh* of another river. The old terror returned, and, with it, the old words came to her, and kept time the whole length of the way with her hasty steps. Such a place to hide him in should be the thought of God to every child.

Their keen sensitiveness to spiritual influences is not due to ignorance on the part of the children. It is we, not they, who are in error. The whole tendency of modern biological thought is to confirm the teaching of the Bible: the ideas which quicken come from above; the mind of the little child is an

open field, surely, "good ground," where, morning by morning, the sower goes forth to sow, and the seed is the Word. All our teaching of children should be given reverently, with the humble sense that we are invited in this matter to co-operate with the Holy Spirit; but it should be given dutifully and diligently, with the awful sense that our co-operation would appear to be made a condition of the divine action; that the Saviour of the world pleads with us to "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," as if we had the power to hinder, as we know that we have.

This thought of the Saviour of the world implies another conception which we sometimes leave out of sight in dealing with children. Young faces are not always sunny and lovely; even the brightest children in the happiest circumstances have their clouded hours. We rightly put the cloud down to some little disorder, or to the weather, but these are the secondary causes which reveal a deep-seated discontent. Children have a sense of sin acute in proportion to their sensitiveness. We are in danger of trusting too much to a rose-water treatment; we do not take children seriously enough; brought face to face with a child we find he is a very real person, but in our educational theories we take him as "something between a wax doll and an angel." He sins; he is guilty of greediness, falsehood, malice, cruelty, a hundred faults that would be hateful in a grown-up person; we say he will know better by-and-by. He will never know better; he is keenly aware of his own odiousness. How many of us would say about our childhood, if we told the whole truth, "Oh, I was an odious little thing!" and that, not because we recollect our faults, but because we recollect our childish estimate of ourselves. Many a bright and merry child is odious in his own eyes; and the "peace, peace where there is no peace" of fond parents and friends is little comfort. It is well that we "Ask for the old paths where is the good way;" it is not well that, in the name of the old paths, we lead our children into blind alleys; nor, that we let them follow the new into bewildering mazes.

NURSERY FRENCH.

BY FRANCES EPPS.

NO. II.

The nursery folk, four of them, ages five to ten, have learned the French names of many of the objects they see; they have made little sentences, "j'aime mon frère," "le chat dort." They have played "J'ai un panier," "Buz," "Vingt Questions." They have danced and sung merrily "A la Monaco," "Sur le pont." And now the mother feels that something fresh is needed, something really interesting and attractive to the children, to keep the Nursery French happily and usefully alive. While seeking for the necessary new ideas, she naturally turns to the children themselves, and, by watching their daily play, soon finds out what interests them most. The two-year-old baby first comes to her aid, sitting at her little table, acting hostess with such grace and propriety whilst offering her tiny cups of imaginary tea to the company of dolls. Then turning to the elder children, she sees the girls, dressed up in bonnet, veil, shawl—anything that looks grown up—absorbed in the parts of ladies and their maid, overwhelmed with family cares, travelling in train, steamer, or railway-omnibus (the sofa does equally well for any conveyance); while the boy discharges with much earnestness and energy the various duties of stoker, guard, captain, driver, uncle to the dolls.

It is difficult to find anything more delightful to children than all "pretend" games, in which they have the bliss of "being" someone else. This love of impersonation may well be turned to account to help on the Nursery French, by arranging little plays in which the mother takes a leading part, and also prepares the little actors before they begin, prompts them during the performance, and by thoughtful as well as